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Request for the inclusion of an item in the provisional agenda of the sixty-eighth session

Observer status for the Pan African Intergovernmental Agency for Water and Sanitation for Africa in the General Assembly

Letter dated 10 July 2013 from the Permanent Representative of Burkina Faso to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

On instruction of my Government and in accordance with rule 13 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, I have the honour to request the inclusion in the provisional agenda of the sixty-eighth session of the General Assembly of an item entitled "Observer status for the Pan African Intergovernmental Agency for Water and Sanitation for Africa in the General Assembly".

In accordance with rule 20 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, I attach herewith an explanatory memorandum (see annex I) and a draft resolution (see annex II).

I should be grateful if you would have the text of the present letter and its annexes circulated as a document of the General Assembly.

(*Signed*) Der **Kogda**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex I

Explanatory memorandum

I. General introduction

1. The idea of establishing the Pan African Intergovernmental Agency for Water and Sanitation for Africa dates back to 1987. The organization was created following the recommendations of water and sanitation experts at the conclusion of a seminar held in Ouagadougou in 1987. The idea was reaffirmed in 1988, leading to the establishment of the Regional Centre for Drinking Water and Sanitation (CREPA), in the context of the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade. The convention setting out the institution's bylaws was signed on 16 November 2001.

2. Historically, the organization was made up of French-speaking African countries, mostly those from West Africa. In 2010, it had 17 member countries, but that number rose to 22 in 2011, following the admission of five new member States: Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Madagascar.

3. With a view to improving the living environment and living conditions of their respective peoples, the various member States gradually made the necessary adjustments to strengthen the organization's institutional capacity. In that connection, after a series of reforms, the Regional Centre for Drinking Water and Sanitation was transformed into the Pan African Intergovernmental Agency for Water and Sanitation for Africa, with the adoption in Ouagadougou, on 8 December 2011, of the convention setting out the bylaws of the new organization.

4. The Agency currently has 32 member States: Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Liberia, Libya, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Uganda, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Swaziland, Togo and Zimbabwe.

5. The organization's headquarters is in Ouagadougou. The Agency signed a headquarters agreement with the host country on 25 November 1997; that agreement was renewed on 15 April 2013 to reflect the change in the organization's name as well as the institutional reforms undertaken accordingly.

II. Principles and objectives

6. For Africa, access to drinking water and sanitation remains a major challenge. In both urban and rural areas, the essential needs of the people are still not met, owing to the scarcity of basic services. While most African countries are engaged in a process of decentralization, through which local communities are entrusted with the responsibility of providing basic services to the people, these communities lack the financial, logistical and human resources needed to accomplish their missions.

7. Considering these difficulties, the Agency has, from its inception, established the goal of promoting sustainable and equitable access to drinking water, hygiene and sanitation services for the African people. It also aims to:

- Develop and disseminate innovative and sustainable solutions for drinking water, hygiene and sanitation;

- Assist regional and subregional institutions, States, local communities and public and private partners in the development and implementation of sustainable drinking water, hygiene and sanitation initiatives, and in the mobilization of financial and human resources;

- Advise African Governments and encourage international, regional and local organizations to develop, implement and monitor policies and strategies to promote access to drinking water, hygiene and sanitation.

III. Structure

8. The Agency's institutional system comprises principal and specialized organs.

9. The principal organs pursue the Agency's missions and comprise the following:

- The Council of Ministers: it is the highest authority of the Agency and is composed of the member States' ministers in charge of water and/or sanitation;

- The Technical Advisory Committee: it is made up of independent experts from the member States and resource persons appointed by the Council of Ministers; the Committee's role is to offer technical assistance and strategic support to the Agency. It also advises the Council of Ministers, which may delegate certain powers to the Committee;

- The Executive Secretariat: it is the organ that carries out the Agency's missions and reports to the Council of Ministers; it is headed by an Executive Secretary appointed by the Council of Ministers through a recruitment process; the Executive Secretariat has national chapters, called "national offices", in each member State.

10. A foundation and a research and training centre constitute the specialized organs of the Agency and were created to accomplish specific missions.

- The foundation is a charitable entity mandated to mobilize and manage financial resources in the form of grants and donations offered by funding agencies to support the Agency's missions;

- The research and training centre is an entity mandated to promote and coordinate knowledge development through the provision of strategic advice, capacity-building, knowledge-sharing and awareness-raising on matters related to water, hygiene and sanitation.

IV. Relations with other organizations

11. To accomplish its mission, the Agency has adopted a policy of diversification and development of special relations with bilateral and multilateral partners (United Nations agencies, private foundations) and with other funding partners in the water and sanitation sector, in order to mobilize the necessary resources to implement its strategic plan.

12. In this connection, the Agency is in discussions with a number of regional organizations operating in its area of expertise. It is working in complementarity and synergy with other continent-wide organizations, including the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), the African Water Association, the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the West African Development Bank and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

13. It also plans to work in close cooperation with the African Union in the near future, with the ultimate goal of achieving full coverage of the African continent.

14. Considering the poor drinking water infrastructure in Africa, the Agency focuses its contribution on providing the necessary technical and scientific support, based on research and action programmes, knowledge management, capacity-building and advice and support to States.

V. Justification of the observer status in the General Assembly

15. The Agency's main objective is to improve the living conditions of the African people by ensuring access to drinking water, hygiene and sanitation.

16. At a time when the entire international community, especially the United Nations, is in a race to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, a partnership with the United Nations is useful and imperative.

17. The Agency contributes significantly to the achievement of many objectives of the United Nations, including in the economic and social spheres, by leveraging drinking water and sanitation to improve people's quality of life.

18. Considering that the Agency's objectives are complementary to those of the United Nations, granting the Agency observer status in the General Assembly would pave the way for mutually beneficial cooperation between the two organizations, which are both engaged in the effort to combat extreme poverty and improve people's quality of life.

19. This status will undoubtedly have an impact on the mobilization of African countries to promote access to drinking water, sanitation and development, in general, as part of the various development processes being negotiated within the United Nations system.

Annex II

Draft resolution

Observer status for the Pan African Intergovernmental Agency for Water and Sanitation for Africa in the General Assembly

The General Assembly,

Wishing to promote cooperation between the United Nations and the Pan African Intergovernmental Agency for Water and Sanitation for Africa,

1. *Decides* to invite the Pan African Intergovernmental Agency for Water and Sanitation for Africa to participate in the sessions and the work of the General Assembly in the capacity of observer;

2. *Requests* the Secretary-General to take the necessary action to implement the present resolution.